

Derek Wallbank, *MinnPost*

WASHINGTON - St. Paul's Union Depot will receive a \$40 million grant from the Department of Transportation, hiking the total federal investment in the station to at least \$125 million.

Rep. Jim Oberstar, chairman of the House Transportation Committee, called the grant a "major step forward for transportation in Minnesota."

In addition to this grant, \$50 million was designated for the facility's renovation in the 2005 surface transportation bill, and another \$35 million came from a stimulus-funded transportation grant. When it's completed, it will be one of the largest intermodal hubs between Chicago and the Rocky Mountains, servicing not just Amtrak's Empire Builder (Chicago to Seattle), but inter-city rail, the Central Corridor light rail, bus, and eventually (advocates hope) a high-speed rail line to Chicago.

"Transforming the Union Depot into a multi-modal transportation hub will make St. Paul - and the entire state of Minnesota - more economically competitive," Rep. Betty McCollum said. "The fact that this \$40 million grant comes from a new high-speed passenger rail program created by the Appropriations Committee is recognition that the Union Depot is Minnesota's link to the Midwest high-speed rail network."

The grant will be officially announced by the Department of Transportation later this week, Oberstar's office said. Union Depot is expected to reopen in September, 2012.